

David Friestad graduated from West Salem High School in 1961, attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and later went on to serve his country in the U.S. Air Force. During his high school years in West Salem he was active in sports, including football, basketball and track, and also participated in Science Club, Drama Thespian Club, Pep Club and Student Council. His classmates thought very highly of his focus, character and involvement, and chose him to speak at his 1961 commencement ceremony.

He was a true hero as evidenced by the sacrifices he made for his country, and the subsequent awards he received for his heroism. He also had a high regard for academic achievement through his pursuit of advanced degrees, culminating with becoming a tenured professor.

David was focused on a flying career beginning in high school when he participated in the Civil Air Patrol. After receiving his bachelor's in science degree from the University of Wisconsin, he was able to continue his passion through flight training in the U.S. Air Force. He qualified in six different aircraft including the F-4 fighter jet and Sky Raider-both of which he flew in Vietnam.

What sets David apart from his peers are his specific heroic actions during two tours in the Vietnam War. The first occurred when he provided air cover fire-support over Laos for a rescue mission involving a down pilot. While providing support, his aircraft was shot down and he required rescuing as well. He was wounded and needed to be plucked out of the jungle by a helicopter, but recovered and continued to serve his country.

The second heroic act occurred north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in North Vietnam. Again, he was providing air cover fire-support for a downed pilot when the previous situation repeated itself. This time, unable to be rescued by helicopter, David needed to rely on his jungle survival and Special Operations training to escape on his own. After many days traveling through the jungle wounded, he was able to walk to safety.

For being constantly exposed to enemy fire during his cover support and other missions, David received several awards for his heroism including the Silver Star (the nation's third highest award; two awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross (the Air Force's highest award); two Purple Hearts for wounds sustained in combat; and 28 air medals-each representing over 100 hours in combat flight.

Throughout his active duty and Air Force Reserve career, David received sixteen medals plus 36 Oak Leaf Clusters, which are awarded subsequently after the first award.

He concluded his flying career with the Indiana Air National Guard as a full Colonel, and then went on to earning his Master's of Science and PhD in Criminology from Florida State University. He ended his career as a tenured professor of Criminology at Indiana State University.

David passed away on August 28, 2004 in Scottsdale, Arizona. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors, surrounded by his fellow airmen, coworkers, friends and family.

He is remembered by all for his commitment and dedication in his service to his country.